



General Assembly

February Session, 2012

Raised Bill No. 81

LCO No. 947

00947_____CE_

Referred to Committee on Commerce

Introduced by:
(CE)

**AN ACT CONCERNING LOAN REPAYMENT TERMS AND THE
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES TO QUALIFY FOR CERTAIN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 32-7g of the 2012 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective July 1, 2012*):

4 (a) There is established within the Department of Economic and
5 Community Development the Small Business Express program. Said
6 program shall provide small businesses with various forms of financial
7 assistance, using a streamlined application process to expedite the
8 delivery of such assistance. The Commissioner of Economic and
9 Community Development may partner with any other entity,
10 including, but not limited to, the Connecticut Credit Consortium
11 established pursuant to section 32-9yy, to meet the requirements of this
12 section. A small business eligible for assistance through said program
13 shall, as of October 27, 2011, (1) employ, on at least fifty per cent of its
14 working days during the preceding twelve months, not more than fifty
15 employees or not more than one hundred employees for a business

16 described in sector 31, 32 or 33 of the North American Industrial
17 Classification System, (2) [be a Connecticut-based business with
18 operations in Connecticut, (3)] have been registered to conduct
19 business [in this state] for not less than twelve months, and [(4)] (3) be
20 in good standing with the payment of all state and local taxes and with
21 all state agencies.

22 (b) The Small Business Express program shall consist of various
23 components, including (1) a revolving loan fund, as described in
24 subsection (d) of this section, to support small business growth, (2) a
25 job creation incentive component, as described in subsection (e) of this
26 section, to support hiring, and (3) a matching grant component, as
27 described in subsection (f) of this section, to provide capital to small
28 businesses that can match the state grant amount. The Commissioner
29 of Economic and Community Development shall work with eligible
30 small business applicants to provide a package of assistance using not
31 only the financial assistance provided by the Small Business Express
32 program but also the Subsidized Training and Employment program
33 established pursuant to section 31-3pp, as amended by this act, and
34 any other appropriate state program. Notwithstanding the provisions
35 of section 32-5a regarding relocation limits, the department may
36 require, as a condition of receiving financial assistance pursuant to this
37 section, that a small business receiving such assistance shall not
38 relocate, as defined in said section 32-5a, for five years after receiving
39 such assistance or during the term of the loan, whichever is longer. All
40 other conditions and penalties imposed pursuant to said section 32-5a
41 shall continue to apply to such small business.

42 (c) The commissioner shall establish a streamlined application
43 process for the Small Business Express program. The small business
44 applicant may receive assistance pursuant to said program not later
45 than thirty days after submitting a completed application to the
46 department. Any small business meeting the eligibility criteria in
47 subsection (a) of this section may apply to said program. The
48 commissioner shall give priority for available funding to (1) small

49 businesses creating jobs, and (2) economic base industries, as defined
50 in subsection (d) of section 32-222, including, but not limited to, those
51 in the fields of precision manufacturing, business services, green and
52 sustainable technology, bioscience and information technology.

53 (d) (1) There is established as part of the Small Business Express
54 program a revolving loan fund to provide loans to eligible small
55 businesses. Such loans shall be used for acquisition or purchase of
56 machinery and equipment, construction or leasehold improvements,
57 relocation expenses, working capital or other business-related
58 expenses, as authorized by the commissioner.

59 (2) Loans from the revolving loan fund may be in amounts from ten
60 thousand dollars to a maximum of [~~one hundred~~] five hundred
61 thousand dollars, shall carry a maximum repayment rate of four per
62 cent and shall be for a term of not more than [~~five~~] ten years. The
63 department shall review and approve loan terms, conditions and
64 collateral requirements in a manner that prioritizes job growth and
65 retention.

66 (3) Any eligible small business meeting the eligibility criteria in
67 subsection (a) of this section may apply for assistance from the
68 revolving loan fund, but the commissioner shall give priority to
69 applicants that, as part of their business plan, are creating new jobs
70 that will be maintained for not less than twelve consecutive months.

71 (e) (1) There is established as part of the Small Business Express
72 program a job creation incentive component to provide loans for job
73 creation to small businesses meeting the eligibility criteria in
74 subsection (a) of this section, with the option of loan forgiveness based
75 on the maintenance of an increased number of jobs for not less than
76 twelve consecutive months. Such loans may be used for training,
77 marketing, working capital or other expenses, as approved by the
78 commissioner, that support job creation.

79 (2) Loans under the job creation incentive component may be in

80 amounts from ten thousand dollars to a maximum of two hundred
81 fifty thousand dollars, shall carry a maximum repayment rate of four
82 per cent and shall be for a term of not more than ten years. Payments
83 on such loans may be deferred, and all or part of such loan may be
84 forgiven, based upon the commissioner's assessment of the small
85 business's attainment of job creation goals. The department shall
86 review and approve loan terms, conditions and collateral requirements
87 in a manner that prioritizes job creation.

88 (f) (1) There is established as part of the Small Business Express
89 program a matching grant component to provide grants for capital to
90 small businesses meeting the eligibility criteria in subsection (a) of this
91 section. Such small businesses shall match any state funds awarded
92 under this program. Grant funds may be used for ongoing or new
93 training, working capital, acquisition or purchase of machinery and
94 equipment, construction or leasehold improvements, relocation within
95 the state or other business-related expenses authorized by the
96 commissioner.

97 (2) Matching grants provided under the matching grant component
98 may be in amounts from ten thousand dollars to a maximum of one
99 hundred thousand dollars. The commissioner shall prioritize
100 applicants for matching grants based upon the likelihood that such
101 grants will assist applicants in maintaining job growth.

102 [(g) Not later than June 30, 2012, and every six months thereafter,
103 the commissioner shall provide a report, in accordance with the
104 provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the
105 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance,
106 revenue and bonding, appropriations, commerce and labor. Such
107 report shall include available data on (1) the number of small
108 businesses that applied to the Small Business Express program, (2) the
109 number of small businesses that received assistance under said
110 program and the general categories of such businesses, (3) the amounts
111 and types of assistance provided, (4) the total number of jobs on the

112 date of application and the number proposed to be created or retained,
113 and (5) the most recent employment figures of the small businesses
114 receiving assistance. The contents of such report shall also be included
115 in the department's annual report.]

116 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established an
117 account to be known as the "small business express assistance account"
118 which will be a separate, nonlapsing account within the General Fund.
119 The account shall contain any money required by law to be deposited
120 in the account. Repayment of principal and interest on loans shall be
121 credited to such fund and shall become part of the assets of the fund.
122 All moneys received in consideration of financial assistance, including
123 payments of principal and interest on any loans, shall be credited to
124 the account. Moneys in the account shall be expended by the
125 Department of Economic and Community Development for the
126 purposes of the Small Business Express program established pursuant
127 to section 32-7g of the general statutes, as amended by this act.

128 (b) The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
129 may provide for the payment of any administrative expenses or other
130 costs incurred by the department or its lender partners in carrying out
131 the purposes of the Small Business Express program from the account
132 established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

133 Sec. 3. Subsection (a) of section 32-235 of the 2012 supplement to the
134 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
135 thereof (*Effective from passage*):

136 (a) For the purposes described in subsection (b) of this section, the
137 State Bond Commission shall have the power, from time to time to
138 authorize the issuance of bonds of the state in one or more series and
139 in principal amounts not exceeding in the aggregate one billion fifteen
140 million three hundred thousand dollars, provided one hundred forty
141 million dollars of said authorization shall be effective July 1, 2011, and
142 twenty million dollars of said authorization shall be made available for
143 small business development. Two hundred eighty million dollars of

144 said authorization shall be effective July 1, 2012, and forty million
145 dollars of said authorization shall be made available for small business
146 development, of which thirty million shall be made available for the
147 Small Business Express program established pursuant to section 32-7g,
148 as amended by this act. Any amount of said authorizations that are
149 required to be made available for small business development but are
150 not exhausted for such purpose by the first day of the fiscal year
151 subsequent to the fiscal year in which such amount was made
152 available shall be used for the purposes described in subsection (b) of
153 this section. For purposes of this subsection, a "small business" is one
154 employing not more than fifty employees.

155 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 31-3pp of the 2012 supplement to the
156 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
157 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2012*):

158 (a) For purposes of this section:

159 (1) "Department" means the Labor Department;

160 (2) "Eligible small business" means a business that (A) employed not
161 more than [fifty] one hundred full-time employees on at least fifty per
162 cent of its working days during the preceding twelve months, (B) is a
163 Connecticut-based business with operations in Connecticut, (C) has
164 been registered to conduct business in this state for not less than
165 twelve months, and (D) is in good standing with the payment of all
166 state and local taxes. "Eligible small business" does not include a
167 retailer, as defined in section 42-371;

168 (3) "Control", with respect to a corporation, means ownership,
169 directly or indirectly, of stock possessing fifty per cent or more of the
170 total combined voting power of all classes of the stock of such
171 corporation entitled to vote. "Control", with respect to a trust, means
172 ownership, directly or indirectly, of fifty per cent or more of the
173 beneficial interest in the principal or income of such trust. The
174 ownership of stock in a corporation, of a capital or profits interest in a

175 partnership, limited liability company or association or of a beneficial
176 interest in a trust shall be determined in accordance with the rules for
177 constructive ownership of stock provided in Section 267(c) of the
178 Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding
179 internal revenue code of the United States, as from time to time
180 amended, other than paragraph (3) of said Section 267(c);

181 (4) "Related person" means (A) a corporation, limited liability
182 company, partnership, association or trust controlled by the eligible
183 small business, (B) an individual, corporation, limited liability
184 company, partnership, association or trust that is in control of the
185 eligible small business, (C) a corporation, limited liability company,
186 partnership, association or trust controlled by an individual,
187 corporation, limited liability company, partnership, association or trust
188 that is in control of the eligible small business, or (D) a member of the
189 same controlled group as the eligible small business;

190 (5) "Eligible small manufacturer" means an eligible small business
191 described in sectors 31 to 33, inclusive, of the North American Industry
192 Classification System, that employed not more than [fifty] one
193 hundred employees on at least fifty per cent of its working days
194 during the preceding twelve months.

195 Sec. 5. Subsection (c) of section 31-3pp of the 2012 supplement to the
196 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
197 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2012*):

198 (c) (1) An eligible small business may apply to the department for a
199 grant to subsidize on-the-job training and compensation for a new
200 employee, where "new employee" means a person who (A) was
201 unemployed immediately prior to employment, regardless of whether
202 such person collected unemployment compensation benefits as a result
203 of such unemployment, (B) is a resident of a municipality that has (i)
204 an unemployment rate that is equal to or higher than the state
205 unemployment rate as of September 1, 2011, or (ii) a population of
206 eighty thousand or more, and (C) has a family income equal to or less

207 than two hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level, adjusted
208 for family size. An eligible small business may apply to the Labor
209 Commissioner for, and the Labor Commissioner may grant, a waiver
210 from the requirements of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of this subdivision
211 for any new employee. "New employee" does not include a person
212 who was employed in this state by a related person with respect to the
213 eligible small business during the prior twelve months.

214 (2) Grants to eligible small businesses under the Subsidized
215 Training and Employment program shall be in the following amounts:
216 (A) For the first full calendar month a new employee is employed, one
217 hundred per cent of an amount representing the hourly wage of such
218 new employee, exclusive of any benefits, but in no event shall such
219 amount exceed twenty dollars per hour; (B) for the second and third
220 full calendar months, seventy-five per cent of such amount; (C) for the
221 fourth and fifth full calendar months, fifty per cent of such amount;
222 and (D) for the sixth full calendar month, twenty-five per cent of such
223 amount. Grants shall be cancelled as of the date the new employee
224 leaves employment with the eligible small business.

225 Sec. 6. (*Effective July 1, 2012*) The sum of one million six hundred
226 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Labor Department, from the
227 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, for the
228 development of job opportunities for unemployed and
229 underemployed older youth and adult workers by the One-Stop
230 Centers, pursuant to section 31-3gg of the general statutes, in
231 collaboration with the regional workforce development boards.

232 Sec. 7. (*Effective July 1, 2012*) The sum of three million one hundred
233 thousand dollars is appropriated to the Labor Department, from the
234 General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, for incumbent
235 worker training in collaboration with the regional workforce
236 development boards.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2012</i>	32-7g
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	32-235(a)
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2012</i>	31-3pp(a)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2012</i>	31-3pp(c)
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2012</i>	New section
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2012</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To allow certain businesses with up to one hundred employees to participate in the Small Business Express and Subsidized Training and Employment programs, lengthen the term for repayment of loans from the Small Business Express program and modify and make appropriations to other programs.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]